Undercover agents...
Undercover romance ON HOLD

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Undercover agents... Undercover romance ON HOLD

By KatLee

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Chapter 1

Undercover agents... Undercover romance - ON HOLD

Several photographs of the same brunette girl flashed across the projection in front of them.

Lady Cole reclined back in her chair, glancing at the man to the right of her.

They were sat alone in the middle of a large empty blackened room.

"Is she trained in weapons?" the grey haired man asked whilst nervously straightening his tie.

"No weapon training as such although she is trained in hand to hand fighting. And with her advanced gymnastics skills, I'm sure she can escape any

dangerous situation." She answered with a wry smile.

The gentleman nodded, looking thoughtful.

"Go back four photos," he said loudly into the empty room, "That one there."

He gestured towards a photo of the girl sat alone in a café staring almost directly into the camera lens. Her long, dark brown hair was messily tied back- partially escaped and framing her face. Her large dark eyes were framed by thick eyelashes and her skin clear and pale with rosy cheeks. She had a cup raised in her hand- her mouth pouting ready to sip the coffee in front of her.

"I've seen women like her before. She reminds me of a vindictive mistress I once had. She's very beautiful, are you sure she won't be a liability-"

"I hope you are not insinuating that her being beautiful makes her untrustworthy. She has nothing to gain from this. I can also assure you that she has a charming personality. Almost... quirky. Clumsy- but not to the extent that she will be a danger to this

mission. She takes her work very seriously. I want to know about the young man you are assigning to accompany her. Can he be trusted?"

"Oh yes." He replied quickly. "I think you'll find that he is quite well suited to her. Trained in all types of weaponry and excellent at driving- cars and even helicopters. He is quite the lothario and not entirely trustworthy... but his pros far outweigh the cons." He finished talking- frowning vaguely into the distance, uncertainty clouding his face.

Lady Cole nodded and turned back to look at the projection. She didn't trust him one bit.

Well, that's sorted then- she thought. Effie Perry, her protégé- the one who she was sure would one day replace her was now was being sent to the slaughter house.

"I hope you're right. This meeting is terminated. The next time I meet you Kane Incorporations will be destroyed, and hopefully I will be the most powerful woman in the country. You may leave now."

Lady Cole picked up the manila file from her side and hurried out of the room, pulling a pen from her inside pocket and scrawling a quick note inside the file.

A single tear escaped her eye as she closed the file and handed it to the porter.

She prayed Effie didn't fall for Tyler Carrington.

****

"Effie Perry, you have one incoming call."

I grab my keys from the top shelf of the freezer whilst hobbling around on one foot trying to put my shoes on.

"Connect." I shout breathlessly, busy trying to remember what my keys were doing there in the first place. As per usual I'm running late- and being the most disorganised person in the world doesn't help.

"Effie, you are Green lit. Forget any plans you have made- you're new assignment is here.

You're assigned name is Tess Palmer. Daughter of the fictitious Eric Palmer, you are to infiltrate Kane

Incorporations along with your fake fiancé, Tyler Carrington. He works for us and will be completely briefed on your shared assignment beforehand.

You've heard of Kane Incorporations haven't you Miss Perry? I haven't the time to continue this conversation- and the line isn't secure. A parcel containing further information is waiting for you just outside your front door. Please don't forget your name this time- Lady Cole is most unimpressed with your previous record.

You start immediately- you will not be returning to this apartment again. I hope you are prepared."

The line went dead and I fell onto the floor, landing on my ass.

Kane Incorporations?! Fiancé? Oh my god.

Usually I have weeks to prepare for an assignment...

Engaged? I shake my head and push myself off the cold floor of my kitchen.

If I start tonight, that means I'll be meeting my 'fiancé' today. How can I pretend to be engaged to someone I've only known for half a day?!

"Oh crap." I mutter, throwing my purse that was slung over my shoulder onto the floor. I head to the front door, glancing at the floor length mirror next to me.

I'm wearing skinny jeans, heels and a long blazer. I yank off my scarf- doesn't look like I'm going into work today.

I unlock the front door and sure enough there's a file sized parcel sat on my doorstep. Huh.

God knows how that got there.

I pick up the parcel cautiously, walking back into my apartment and kicking shut the door closed behind me.

I throw myself onto the sofa in the living area and rip open the parcel- a manila file landing in my lap.

'Effie Perry' is typed on a large white sticker in the right hand corner of the file. It's always a strange feeling seeing my real name.

I open the file and flick through the pages of instructions and assignment information... blah blah blah.

Boring.

"Same old." I whisper to myself.

Looks like I need to get close to Victor Kane, head of Kane Incorporations. He is worth billions of pounds- owning almost half of the city. A giant hulk of a man- he terrifies nearly anyone who gets close to him. It's well known that he didn't get his money from just doing good business- he's often referred to as Kingpin Kane. Mafia dealings, drug lording... you name it.

At the moment he lives in an old manor and boarding house attached to the largest sky scraper in the country. The boarding house contains what people call 'Kane's Successors'. They are a group of over forty seventeen to twenty year olds- from some

of the richest families in the world. They are there to be taught and moulded into future employees and agents of Victor Kane.

I'd heard many rumours and shady stories about Kane's Successors. Apparently Kane employs whores to keep them occupied, trains them in various forms of combat, gives them all the money they demand...

It was only last year that an office worker from one of the floors of his sky scraper sold her story to a newspaper- after having escaped from the building. Apparently she had been forced to lap dance for Kane's Successors, which then developed into her being forced to dance for them naked and then was locked in one of the boy's dorms for two weeks...

I gulp and close my eyes, not wanting to turn over to the next page. I don't want to read my 'character analysis'. I remind myself that they're only rumours that I have heard, they're most probably all lies. Right?

Please say I'm not whore. In my job I'll do almost anything... but not that.

I take several deep breathes and turn to the next page.

'Tess Palmer. Eighteen years old, an English Language student and part time barmaid from South Bookridge, engaged to twenty year old Tyler Carrington. Thanks to ten years of hard work by hundreds of people, you are to be a personal guest of Victor Kane. He believes that Tyler Carrington is the son of his deceased brother. He wishes to bless your engagement.'

I gasp and re read the short paragraph.

Personal guest?!

I thought I would be a cleaner or secretary- not an actual wanted guest. This must have taken a lot of hard work and years of producing fake documents to convince Victor Kane that his brother's son was Tyler Carrington.

I read through more background information, memorising my story and becoming familiar with Tess Palmer.

'I am Tess, I am Tess, I am Tess...' I repeat again and again in my head.

I turn over the page expecting to find a photograph of my 'fiancé' but instead find a note scrawled on a small piece of paper.

'Do not fall for him. He'll be waiting outside at seven. Good luck Effie x'

I recognise Lady Cole's writing and smile.

I spend over 2 hours memorising the pages of information and try to become Tess Palmer.

After a while the doorbell rings and another parcel sits on my doorstep- this time containing a little black dress and high heels, with matching accessories and jacket. I change quickly and open my purse.

Two credit cards, one library card, two loyalty cards and a voucher all under the name of Tess Palmer. Oh, and a few notes and coins.

I shake my head at the abruptness of it. I'm suddenly a whole new person.

At half past six I head to the front door again, this time checking the appearance of Tess in the mirror.

I try to pull my dress up at the front. The little black dress is very short and low cut, revealing my ample cleavage and making me blush. I've always been embarrassed of my chest- wearing baggy shirts and loose fitting tops. Don't get me wrong, I'm a confident person and proud of my curves, it's just I'm also thin and toned

(thanks to my love of dancing, oh, and sports) and the first thing guys notice is not my personality or wide smile...

I just don't like being treated as an object.

I reach into my purse and pull out a small square box and snap it open. I pull the sparkling engagement ring out of it and slide it onto my finger.

"You can do this." I say to myself in the mirror.

Is it crazy to talk to yourself? Oh I hope not.

Courage.

Without thinking I head out of my apartment and walk towards the elevator, pressing the button for the ground floor. When the doors open I head into the empty lobby and make my way to the front door of the building.

****

As soon as I open the front doors the noise and smell of the city hits me. My apartment block is in the middle of the busiest area of the city and you can tell.

A moving wall of people is in front of me, and I push my way through them towards the road. As soon as I get a clear view of the street and cars I search for a black Mercedes.

Black Mercedes, black Mercedes...

There.

A dark blonde haired guy is leaning against the passenger's door, casually throwing something into the air and catching it again and again. His head looks up, his eyes meeting mine and smiles. I realise I've been staring at his shirt tightening around his

bicep every time his arm rises to catch the object. Oops.

Instantly I feel a tug in my chest at that crooked smile. His bright blue eyes sparkle at me, and he runs a hand through his golden messy and rough hair.

Wow, he's gorgeous.

"Honey! There you are! I've been waiting for almost half an hour." He yells, jogging towards me. I almost turn around to see who he's talking to.

"Tess, come on- we'll be late." He grins.

As soon as he reaches me he pulls me towards him and kisses me on the cheek. I frown and almost pull away.

"Ha, you're not still annoyed with me are you? Come on lets go."

He grabs my hand and gently pulls me towards the car, opening the passenger seat and indicating for me to enter the vehicle. I do, slowly.

Why am I finding this so difficult to get my head around? It's just another job. I'm just an actress. C'mon Eff... I mean Tess. I can do this!

A few seconds later he jumps into the driver's seat and pulls away from the curb, trying to find a way into the traffic.

"Bloody traffic. Oh no, we couldn't get the train could we? Or go by helicopter. Had to be a stupid car..." he mumbles to himself.

I wonder if he's noticed that I haven't said a word yet.

"Errr... Tyler?"

He glances at me and nods. He looks surprised that I've finally said something.

"Tyler. Tyler Carrington. Tye." I repeat quietly.

"You new to this? Don't worry it's pretty easy. Been an agent for years I have... one of the best." He says, winking at me. "You're safe with me. Didn't think they'd assign a rookie but oh well. Must be 'looks' over brains or something this time..."

"Excuse me!" I shout.

"I'll have you know I've been doing this for years as well. I'm just a little shocked that's all. And what did you mean by looks over brains?! I'm intelligent I'll have you know."

I cross my arms angrily and stared at him.

He bursts out laughing, wiping his eyes with his hand. Thank god the traffic is so bad or I'd accuse him of dangerous driving.

"Well you haven't really said anything with even a vague trace of intelligence, and look at you! It was a compliment. God, I should anger you more if it makes you cross your arms like that. That dress really isn't going to keep everything-"

I slap his leg before he can finish talking, which makes him laugh again.

I can't help thinking about how hard the muscle of his thigh was where I hit it...

"Oh honey, calm down. Half and hour and we'll be there. All this sexual tension- you know what we need to do to make this car journey more interesting?" he looks at me, mischief in his eyes.

"I'm not doing anything that compromises our safety. And that means distracting the driver, so think again." I say, a little too harshly in my opinion.

He raises his eyebrows and continues driving in silence. Maybe he was only trying to be funny, break the ice and all that...

"Sorry. Tye, honey, just drive us to Kane's sensibly." I say sweetly, back into 'Tess' mode and reach over, squeezing his leg.

"A little higher I'll forgive you. Knew you wouldn't be able to resist copping a feel."

I snatch my hand back and instinctively cross my arms, before quickly dropping them onto my lap and turning to look out of my window.

This is going to be harder than I thought it would be.

Chapter 2

Undercover agents... Undercover romance Part 2

I'd been sat in a car with my fake fiancé for almost half an hour now. The traffic was almost at a standstill and in between staring out of the window and blinking, I'd considered sleeping. Twice Tyler had tried to talk to me but I wasn't in a conversational mood.

"Looks like we're having our first domestic." He muttered.

"I don't know what you're talking about darling. You know I like being silent in the car." I replied, looking at him with a large fake grin.

He rolled his eyes and shook his head.

"Look I'm sorry, I was only having a little fun. Looks like I'm going to have to find a way to make you like me."

Oh dear. I don't like the sound of that.

Before I could ask him what he was thinking, he yanked on the steering wheel and drove right- directly onto the sidewalk.

"What are you doing?!" I shouted, grabbing hold of the dash board.

"Shhh- I need to concentrate" he said quietly, not paying attention to me.

He was slowly picking up speed whilst weaving the car between street lights, benches and other obstacles... even pedestrians.

Oh god we're going to die.

I closed my eyes and breathed slowly, thinking of the countless times when I've been in more dangerous situations. The car was bumping up and down along the uneven sidewalk. A minute later and the car slammed back onto a smooth surface.

"Here we go, shouldn't take too long now."

I opened my eyes to see that we were now driving down a clear alley.

"We're not on the main road anymore, are you sure you know the back roads?" I asked.

"Of course. I know this city like the back of my hand."

I nodded, waited a second and then hit him hard on the arm. Instantly he flinched and began rubbing his arm. I'd surprised him.

"What was that for?!!"

"For nearly killing us! What were you thinking?!" I shouted in reply.

"You looked bored! I thought you'd be happy. It won't take long now."

I muttered more insults about his sanity until I could clearly see the Kane Incorporations building. Wow.

The huge steel building stared down at us, tall and foreboding. I bit my lip, suddenly feeling anxious and even a little bit scared.

Without saying a word Tyler grabbed my hand and squeezed it.

He didn't let go until we were safely parked.

****

"Good evening Mister Carrington and Miss Palmer. I'm afraid that because of your late arrival, you have missed dinner. Mister Kane is aware of the traffic problems this evening and will be waiting for you upstairs on the 24th floor." A woman dressed entirely in red said. She slid an envelope across the reception counter and pointed us in the direction of the elevators.

I was hanging onto Tyler's arm, looking up and smiling at him- trying to make us look like a happy couple completely in love. Tyler grabbed the envelope, opened it and pulled out two security passes on long neck-ties. He turned to face me and pulled the pass over my head. He stared into my eyes as he did it and used a hand to gently pull my hair out from under the string of the pass. When his fingers brushed over the back of my neck it felt very intimate, almost making me shiver.

I blushed and smiled at him, whispering a thank you before standing on my tiptoes to kiss him on the cheek.

"Come on, lets' go. Let's not keep him waiting for too long." I said, pulling him towards an open elevator.

I couldn't help but notice every girl in the room staring at us. Well, staring at Tyler. Who wouldn't? He's gorgeous.

A second later and we were stood in the elevator with about 15 other people. Tyler was pulling his pass on, so I decided to pass the time by lifting my pass up to look at it.

It wasn't very interesting. A large photo of my face was on the left of the pass, my name and age on the right.

'Tess Palmer', age 18.

I wondered if Tyler knew that my real age was 17.

Probably not. I've always looked older than my age and he shouldn't know any 'real' facts about me.

"Tess, it's our floor next." Tyler whispered. I nodded and let go of the pass, letting it fall against my chest.

We walked out of the elevator in silence and into an empty lobby. There was one large glass, blue door standing at the other side of the lobby, about seven meters in front of us. As we approached the door two large built men, wearing black suits appeared from the shadows next to the door. I jumped and fought to suppress an embarrassed giggle. Tyler showed his security pass to one of them.

"Ah it's you, the famous Tyler Carrington. Victor's been looking forward to meeting you for weeks now. And this must be your girlfriend." One of them said excitedly. I flashed my hand in front of my face, showing him my engagement ring.

"I'm his fiancée actually." I said, smiling.

The other guard laughed in a deep voice.

"That's what all the girlfriends say." He joked, winking at Tyler. I couldn't help frowning.

The guard took what looked like a phone from his pocket and after a minute of pressing buttons and

talking into it quietly he opened the door and gestured for us to enter the room.

Oh god. I'm actually going to be face to face with Victor Kane. Do I call him Victor? Mr Kane? Uncle Kane?

I'm so absorbed worrying about how to refer to him that it takes me a minute to realise that Tyler has led me into the room and we're standing face to face with Victor.

We're in a large, modern office. In front of us is a long mahogany desk and a wall covered in shelves with books and other random ornaments. Victor is standing in the middle of the room walking towards us.

"My nephew! It has been many years." Victor said, opening his arms wide.

"Ah, and the girl. This must be dear Tess; I have heard many things about you."

He reached towards me and took my hand, kissing it.

I smiled and bowed my head slightly.

"Mister Kane, it is an honour to finally meet you."

He laughed a deep, rumbling laugh and shook his head.

"Please, call me Victor. And Tyler, I would very much like for you to call me uncle."

I smiled and studied him for the first time. He didn't look like what I had imagined him to look like.

He had short, grey hair and a black goatee. He looked no older than 50 and was in good condition for his age- well built and toned. For some reason I had imagined him fatter and more Italian looking- I guess like someone from a Mafia film.

He let my hand drop and swung his arm around Tyler to pat him on the back.

"I'm glad to be here Uncle, finally. After all the weeks of phone calls and emails, I'm finally face to face with you." Tyler replied.

Victor nodded.

"Yes. Well, I was afraid I wouldn't be able to see you tonight- as you are very late and I have important plans for the evening."

I opened my mouth to apologise but before I could Victor raised a hand to silence me.

"Don't worry about it. I suggest you go to the bar of the Powell Hotel, owned by me. My son David will be there tonight and I know he would very much like to meet you."

Tyler nodded and talked some more with Victor whilst I stood there, looking around his office. On the walls hung expensive paintings, on the shelves statues that must cost millions, a large Persian rug lay on the floor.... I couldn't believe how lavish the room was.

I must have been in a world of my own- because a minute later they were both silent and staring at me. Oops.

"Err... sorry. I must have been in a world of my own. I was just admiring your office Victor; I especially like the Degas painting in the corner." I said almost too

quickly, trying my best to win him over with flattery and impress him with my knowledge of the painting.

"Ah yes. That is an exquisite piece. I have to say, there is something very charming about you Tess. Anyway, I was just saying to Tyler that I hope you have a nice evening and I'll see you tomorrow for lunch. Tonight you will be sleeping in a private room of mine in this building itself which is similarly decorated- I'm sure you'll appreciate it Tess."

Victor shook our hands and led us out of the office and into the hallway. He bade farewell to us there and headed for a private elevator which was open and full of almost a dozen security guards. We walked to the same elevator we had come up in and I automatically waved goodbye to Victor. Instantly I felt stupid, surely waving is too informal for someone as powerful as him?

He smiled at me weakly and raised his arm in a salute.

The doors shut and we were heading downstairs.

"That wasn't so bad was it?" Tyler mumbled into my hair from beside me.

I shook my head and lowered my hand which was still waving.

"No. He isn't half as scary as I thought he'd be." I replied. I reached for Tyler's hand and held it.

"You're not too bad either." I joked.

I looked up at Tyler to see him looking down at me with an unusual expression. He quickly looked away, acting embarrassed as if I had caught him doing something he didn't want me to see.

A second later and he was back to normal- as if I had imagined it.

"Well, I wonder what David is like. Let's hope he's as nice as Victor." Tyler said solemnly.

Chapter 3

Undercover agents... Undercover romance Part 3

Twenty minutes later and we were walking through the front doors of the exclusive Powell Hotel Bar, past the queue of people waiting outside. We had arrived in a chauffer driven limo (provided by Victor) and I had drank a whole glass of champagne during the journey. Usually I try my best not to drink alcohol; it's not a good idea in my line of work. Tyler had persuaded me that 'one drink wouldn't hurt' so I did. God I hate champagne.

A man at the door greeted us and led us to a private room where David was supposedly waiting. He knocked politely on the door and ushered for us to enter the dimly lit room.

Inside was a small table surrounded with 5 chairs and a darkened private bar along one wall, with a barman making cocktails.

At the table was sat who I presumed was David, alone.

He had short, messy light brown hair and dark eyes. He had high cheekbones and a light dusting of stubble across his jaw. He sat there and smiled at us, creating dimples in his cheeks.

I had to remind myself that I was engaged to Tyler. Damn it.

I breathed deeply and tried to look composed and less like I was checking him out- which I obviously was.

"Good evening. Tyler and Tess isn't it?" he purred without standing.

Tyler replied and I just nodded.

We walked over to the table where he invited us to sit.

"You don't look anything like my uncle. How unusual." David said bluntly.

I was a little taken aback by it but remained quiet.

"You won't believe how many times I'm told that cousin. Apparently I have his eyes and hair colouring, but that's all."

David nodded slowly, eyeing Tyler suspiciously.

"Am I right in believing we've only met once before, when we were children?" David asked, obviously testing Tyler.

Tyler laughed.

"Do you not remember the summer when we all went fishing in the Everglades? I must have been at least four, you were older. As I remember you caught the biggest catch of the day."

David instantly broke into a smile and nodded enthusiastically.

"Of course. As I recall that was the last time we met, my father and I remember it fondly. It was shortly before your mother died."

Tyler nodded.

"And you, Tess; I hear you are soon to be a Kane. Of course Tyler's name is incorrectly Carrington, thanks to his mother's side of the family. You should get it changed cousin." David said, turning from me to Tyler.

"Sadly I've made quite a name for myself already. And after all these years I've grown rather used to it I'm afraid." Tyler replied.

David laughed quickly and looked back at me.

"As I was saying, you are engaged to Tyler I hear? Brilliant. He's done quite well I can see- you are beautiful if you don't mind me saying. Oh, how rude of me, I haven't ordered you a drink."

Before I could protest I had a drink sat in front of me. Mojito or something he had called it. I took a few sips. Wow.

David carried on talking and made small talk with Tyler. I joined in but remained mostly quiet, like I had earlier with Victor. Tyler knows what he's talking

about- I don't want to accidentally say something stupid.

An hour and 2 drinks later we were still sat there, talking to David.

I noticed that David looked on edge, constantly checking his watch and looking at the door. After a few minutes of this I couldn't keep ignoring it. I'd clearly had too much to drink.

"David, if you don't mind me asking- what is your problem?" I asked directly. I felt Tyler stiffen next to me and saw David look at me with wide eyes.

"I don't know what you mean." He replied evenly.

"Yes you do. Why do you keep checking the time and the door? What are you waiting for? I can see that you're obviously hiding something from us." I blurted out.

Tyler opened his mouth and began apologising on behalf of me.

"You're right and I'm sorry." David said interrupting Tyler, without looking at him.

"What is it then?" I asked.

David scrunched his eyes closed and rubbed a hand across his forehead.

"I got in some trouble earlier today gambling. It's nothing really. I'm surprised my father hasn't mentioned my 'problem' already. I'm waiting for some guys to come and... get their 'payment' as you'd call it. They know I have the money to pay them. I can't explain it. You wouldn't understand."

"They're going to beat the shit out of you?" I asked.

Tyler gasped, exclaiming 'Tess!'

David just nodded.

"Right. Well Tyler and I have some money on us. We could vouch for you and pay them tonight. Sort it out with him while I go to the toilet." I said, standing up. My legs felt wobbly and I stumbled a little bit as I stood up. Tyler grabbed my arm and looked at me with concern.

"Tess, do you want me to come with you? I don't want you to go on your own-"

"Oh shut up Tyler. I'm capable of going to the toilet on my own." I replied, straightening my dress and trying my best to appear sober.

Tyler looked at me for a second and just nodded.

I added a quick 'Love youuuu!' just in case David had any doubts about me and Tyler, after all I did just tell Tyler to shut up.

He turned to David and carried on talking about the gambling problems as I walked away from the table towards the door.

I asked a steward near the door where the toilets were and walked out of the door and into the main bar. It was a large dark room lit by many different coloured lights and lanterns. There was a crowd of people dancing that wasn't there earlier; to a live band that were playing on a raised stage.

I felt like I was being watched as I walked across the room and turned around. There was no one there but random people, milling around and drinking. When I turned back round to carry on walking to the

toilets a guy was stood in front of me, dressed in a smart suit.

"Good evenin'. You're hot if you don't mind me saying." He shouted over the music.

I shook my head and pushed past him.

He followed beside me, obviously not taking the hint.

"Seriously. I think you're really good looking. Why don't you come back with me?" he carried on.

I shook my head in disbelief, refusing to look at him. I stopped and waved my left hand in his face.

"Engaged!" I shouted and continued walking away from him again.

Alarm bells were ringing in my head but a part of me just didn't care. I really needed to wee! I completely blame the alcohol.

"Engaged to who may I ask? He's obviously not here now." he asked from beside me. Again he was following me.

"My fiancé. Now leave me alone or I'll go back into that little room and get him to beat the shit out of

you." I threatened. Wow. I don't usually have a short temper- I really must be drunk.

Funny that, he doesn't sound like he's been drinking at all.

I stopped walking and turned to look at him. His suit was incredibly formal and not creased- unlike everyone else in the bar. His hair and skin looked flawless and his breath smelt of peppermint.

The alarm bells start ringing again.

"Please leave me alone." I said quietly, pushing past him and into the crowd. I'm at least three metres away when I feel a hand grab me from behind. I spin around to face a different guy dressed in a formal suit.

Without thinking I slammed my heel onto his foot and pulled away from him whilst he shouted in pain. I turned to run through the crowd, pushing past people dancing. Eventually I made it to the wide empty dark corridor where the toilets are and ran down it and some stairs to the girls toilets. I tripped

on the last step, landing on the floor but quickly jumped up and ran into the bathroom.

There was one other lady in there leaving as I entered who gave me a strange look. I must have looked flustered.

I really needed the toilet so decided to go quickly- hoping to be able to go before the strangers caught up with me. I ran into a toilet stall and did my business, all the time listening out for the sound of someone entering the toilets.

I didn't hear anything but fished in my purse for something to use as a weapon. I couldn't find anything so looked around the stall.

Ha. Beer bottle. That'll do.

I grabbed it off the floor and unlocked the door, walking to where the sinks were. There was no one else in there so I continued to wash my hands and placed the bottle next to me where I could quickly reach it.

I looked into the mirror and instinctively pulled my dress up a little and smoothed my hair. I bent to the

sink to throw some water on my face and stood up to look in the mirror again. Directly behind me the man from earlier stood grinning.

Before I could do anything he grabbed me from behind and covered my mouth with one hand. I tried to scream and stamp on his foot again but he outmanoeuvred me. I even tried to elbow him but he had me held against him too tightly. He reached his other arm in front of me to grope my chest.

I screamed and bit his hand, causing him to flinch. I twisted in his arms and elbowed him in the rib cage, making him gasp. I freed an arm and grabbed the bottle off the side. Just as he brought a gun out of his jacket, I smashed the bottle on the side near the sink and kicked the gun out of his hand. Within seconds I had him pressed up against a wall with the broken bottle under his neck.

"What do you want with me?" I asked surprisingly calmly.

"I'm sorry, please don't kill me!" he squealed.

I rolled my eyes and repeated the question.

"We came to get you. David Kane had blabbed earlier today about his cousin coming to town with his fiancée and we thought that we could make a bit of money if we stole you for ransom. I'm sorry! Please don't hurt me; I was just doing my job!"

I nodded but didn't move the bottle.

"Take off your jacket." I ordered.

He nodded and did as I told him quickly, whilst I stuck my hands into his trouser pockets searching them. I didn't find anything.

In the inside pocket of his jacket was another gun which I pulled out and pointed at him. I could put the bottle down and move further away from him.

I continued to rifle through his pockets with one hand and found a wallet. A quick search of it and I found his drivers licence and other cards.

"Right, Liam. Here's how this is going to work- I'm guessing you have someone waiting at the top of the stairs who's stopping people from coming down here?" I asked.

He nodded.

"Well Liam, I have your drivers licence and all sorts of important and revealing cards here. If you tell anyone, including the guy upstairs that I managed to over power you- I will hand all of this I.D. to Victor Kane. I'm pretty sure he'd be unhappy to hear that you tried to kidnap me. Then you and your family will be hunted and most probably killed, do you understand?"

Again, he nodded.

"I want you to go running upstairs and convince him that there are too many security guards of mine down here. You need to tell him that your mission is cancelled, comprende?"

"Yes." He whispered.

"Right, well, I'll give you your jacket back. And your guns back, without the ammo, before you get any ideas."

He nodded and looked relieved. I lowered the gun, clicked on the safety and emptied the chamber. I threw the gun and jacket at him, picking up the other

gun and doing the same. I kept a few cards out of his wallet and threw that at him as well.

He pulled on his jacket and straightened himself out before nodding at me.

He walked towards the door and turned to look at me.

"Thanks." He mumbled, and then ran out.

As soon as he left I collapsed against the wall, sliding onto the floor- my legs feeling like jelly. I closed my eyes and drew in a shaky breath.

Oh my god, my cover could have been blown.

I feel a vibrating from my purse and pull out my phone.

Tyler.

"Hello?" I said quietly.

"Are you alright? You still in the toilets? Look- David has gone home early. I'll meet you outside the toilets, okay?" Tyler said quickly.

I looked over towards the wall near the toilet stalls, looking for an emergency exit. Thankfully there was one.

"Can I just meet you outside of the bar? Near the front doors? Thank you" I replied.

Before he could say anything I hung up and stood up.

I walked towards the door and felt around it, trying to find the wires that set off the fire alarm. I mess around with them, re directing them so that the alarm doesn't go off when I open the door.

I shut the door behind me and run up a set of dark stairs, emerging in an alley next to the bar.

I run down it and make my way to the front doors of the bar. I flash my I.D. at the bouncers who let me back in. Instantly I see Tyler waiting near the inside of the doors.

He's searching the crowd for me and I see the surprise on his face as he see's me come in from outside.

"How'd you get out ther-" he begins to ask.

I throw my arms around him and bury my head in his chest. His arms instinctively wrap around me. I pull away and look up into his questioning face. Before he can ask me any more questions I stand on my tip toes and kiss him. When my lips touch his I feel his body jolt with surprise before he relaxes into the kiss.

A few seconds later and I stop and nearly fall over. Luckily his arms are still around me and I look up to see him leaning over me, his blonde hair framing his face and his blue eyes twinkling.

"You're drunk." Is all he says, smiling.

"Please just take me home." I murmur.

*****

The limo was waiting for us outside and we drove straight back to the Kane Tower.

I can hardly keep my eyes open, and before I know it we're standing outside our room, on one of the top floors.

I say 'we're standing' but by that I mean Tyler, because I'm in his arms.

"Put me down." I manage to mumble.

He laughs gently and slowly puts me down. I lean against him as we walk into the suite.

We enter a large living room first, and I kick my shoes off. Tyler waits patiently beside me, and we head for the bedroom.

I notice the double bed and groan.

"I'm not sharing a bed with you." I say.

"Oh come of it Tess, we're engaged."

I roll my eyes and bite my lip to stop myself from saying anything I regret.

Without thinking I pull out my phone and test a feature called 'security wizard' that I'd just had installed.

Basically it checks how many security cameras and other wireless devices are in the room listening and watching us.

Tyler laughs and shakes his head.

"I know for a fact the apartment is safe. Victor doesn't like people watching him and this used to be his apartment, he told me himself that it's the only floor with no cameras."

I ignore him and continue checking the rooms.

Safe.

I nod and turn back to look at him.

"Right, Tyler. I'm not sharing a bed with you." I repeat, knowing he doesn't need to keep up with the 'engaged' charade.

"Tess, what if someone wakes us up in the night? Or room service come early? It's better to be safe."

I think about it and nod.

I remember the guy grabbing me in the toilets earlier. I don't think I want to be alone tonight.

Fifteen minutes later and we're both in bed, as far away from each other as possible. I even put a pillow down the middle of the bed in between us.

"Night Tess." Tyler whispers.

"Goodnight Tyler." I reply, my eyes drifting shut. I remember looking towards the window and noticing a small red flash from the corner of the shut curtains before falling asleep. The light of someone watching us.

Chapter 4

Undercover agents... Undercover romance Part 4

Sorry, not much happens in this chapter- but alot will in the next. I should be uploading it either tomorrow or the day after, half of it's written- I just didnt want to include it with this one!

*

I was lying in bed, warm and relaxed. I must have been asleep for hours and I felt myself slowly wake up, my eyes fluttering open. For a second I forgot where I was and opened my eyes, expecting to see my familiar apartment and the usual green alarm clock next to my bed. Instead I was staring into the bare chest of someone lying inches away from me.

Tyler.

I instinctively backed away from him slightly and noticed for the first time that our legs were intertwined and his arm was thrown over me. How on earth did we get like this? I cautiously looked up to see if Tyler was still asleep, and then began to gently wriggle free from him. At one point when I tried to slide my leg out from under his he mumbled and moved. I froze, hoping that he would stay asleep. I reached for a long pillow from behind me and after a few minutes I was standing beside the bed, Tyler's arms and legs wrapped around the pillow. I nearly laughed out loud at the success of it, and covered my mouth with my hand, before grabbing hold of the bedside table.

Standing up made me feel dizzy.

Why do I feel so light headed?

I need a bathroom.

I don't think I've ever run that fast before in my life. After opening the doors of 3 wardrobes I eventually found the en-suite bathroom and collapsed in front

of the toilet. There is almost nothing in the world worse than throwing up.

Weakly I flushed the toilet and leaned against the cool tiles next to it. I tried to remember what had happened the night before but couldn't. I remembered something to do with meeting David Kane, and going to the toilet.

Just as my memories started to come back I threw myself at the toilet again, throwing up for a second and third time. I didn't hear Tyler walk into the bathroom, but felt it as his strong hands lifted my hair from my face. He kneeled behind me and stroked my back, whispering soothing words.

"I think I'm alright now," I croaked, flushing the toilet for a final time. I relaxed into Tyler as he wrapped his arms around me.

"You should brush your teeth," he mumbled from somewhere near my ear. I rolled my eyes and stood up weakly, Tyler helping me. Tyler got to the sink before me and took a toothbrush out of a packet and squirted toothpaste onto it. He then handed it to me,

before closing the lid on the toilet and gesturing for me to sit down.

"I'm not dying Tyler. I pretty sure I'm perfectly capable of standing to brush my own teeth."

Tyler sighed and gently pushed my shoulders, forcing me to sit down.

I wasn't about to argue so I started to brush my teeth whilst Tyler Stood opposite me looking concerned. I couldn't help but notice that he was topless, only wearing grey, baggy, jogging bottoms.

I looked down at the night gown I was wearing, and memories of getting changed and ready for bed, as well as the rest of the night came flooding back. I stopped brushing and walked over to the sink. When I was done I turned to Tyler and leaned against the sink to talk to him.

"I got attacked last night," I said calmly.

Tyler looked at me confused and opened his mouth twice to talk, both times changing his mind. I should have probably said 'good morning' or something first,

he looks completely befuddled. It's obvious he was fast asleep before my bathroom troubles.

"Tess," he finally said, "you drank a lot last night. I don't think you realise how drunk you were, you could hardly walk-"

"Oh shut up Ty." I interrupted.

"I got attacked on the way to the toilet by some guys that David had been gambling with. They explained about how David had blabbed to them about his cousin and fiancé arriving in town; and they decided I would make a good ransom. Look," I walked back into the bedroom, leaving Tyler looking more confused than ever. I grabbed my purse from the floor and opened it, taking out the ID cards of the guy who attacked me.

"Here he is. Liam Denning. I managed to persuade him to run off back to his daddy. Dunno if they'll try again though..." I trailed off, thinking about more possible attacks and ransom attempts.

Tyler grabbed the cards off me and instantly looked more alert. Before he had looked slightly tired and

ruffled... some would say sexy. Not me of course, oh no. Ahem.

"Tess! Why didn't you tell me this last night? Jesus... you could have been kidnapped or killed. What are you playing at?! I knew I shouldn't have let you go on your own. You're not leaving my side from now on. I need to report this to Victor right away-"

I snatched the cards off him and stuffed them back into my purse before snapping it shut.

"I handled it didn't I? It does not need reporting. You do your job and I'll do mine. If it happens again, I'm sure you'll be at my side like a goddamn leach and I can pretend to be your damsel in distress, so that we can report it to Victor Kane. I don't want him hearing about how the supposed fiancé of his nephew was able to overpower a man twice the size of her. There'll be too many questions. Just wait for next time."

I had been almost shouting at him, and threw my purse onto a chair before turning to the wall with all the wardrobes on it. I started opening random doors,

searching for clothes and slamming them shut when I couldn't find any.

"Tess," Tyler said from behind me. I ignored him and carried on yanking open the doors.

"Tess, please. I'm sorry. I completely understand, you did the right thing. By the way, your wardrobes are the last few on the far left. I'll leave the room and let you get ready, I need breakfast anyway."

I only turned to look at him when I could hear him leave the room, and watched him as he walked through the doorway pulling a shirt on over his head.

He shut the door behind him and I sighed, massaging a hand over my forehead.

"Trust me to not get on well with the most gorgeous guy I've ever met. Wish he was just pretty and not so annoying-" I mumbled to myself quietly whilst picking an outfit to wear.

It turns out that Tess Palmer is a fan of wearing dresses, I realised. Effie isn't.

I searched for a pair of jeans, but in the end settled for a short white dress and matching heels.

Stupid hangover. I'd give anything for a comfy pair of jeans and sweater.

Half an hour later after showering, changing, and applying a tiny bit of makeup, I was stood in front of the bedroom mirror checking myself out. I looked like your regular city poser, bent on looking fashionable and perfect...

"I need to buy jeans. Torn jeans. With stains and everything," I shouted, hoping Tyler could hear me.

I could hear him laugh so I walked into the other room. It was a large kitchen/living room, with the ultra modern kitchen on the left side and white minimalistic sofa area on the right. I walked towards Tyler who was sat at the breakfast bar, surrounded by food. He indicated to counter in front of him and pulled a stool out.

"Wow, looks like you've been busy," I said, staring at the food on the kitchen counter.

"I could say the same about you," he replied, "you look gorgeous."

I smiled weakly and threw myself into the stool next to him.

"Shame you don't like the dresses. They suit you." He added whilst taking a large bite out of a croissant. He was staring at the top of my dress with a glazed expression.

"Thanks," I replied chirpily, snatching the croissant off him and jumping off the stool, "it's a shame that I'm not a big eater in the morning. Coffee and this half eaten croissant will do."

Tyler pulled a childish face at me and picked up some more food off the counter.

I poured myself a coffee and leaned against the counter watching him.

"What are the plans for today honey?" I asked sweetly.

"Going upstairs where Victor will introduce us to the whole family, including business partners, and then

he's taking us on a tour of the boarding house. You know, the one where he trains his successors," Tyler replied ignoring that I had obviously been teasing him by calling him 'honey'.

I gulp and nod.

"I think Victor was considering letting you work there temporarily, as some sort of tutor to them. Obviously that would be amazing for you future job prospects if you have worked for Victor Kane. He only hires the best. Of course I'll be there in the evenings as I think we'll be staying in an apartment in the old manor. Victor hopes we'll stay there permanently I think. That's after we get married which will be ages away," Tyler continues.

I look unsure. I'm not that much older than the red blooded, all-male pupils I'll be working with. I've heard so many scary stories about them that the idea of being alone with them during the day and the sleeping in the same building with them is terrifying. I'm just glad that my engagement to Tyler isn't real and that we'll probably never end up getting married, I'd hate to live there permanently.

I shake my head to clear it and try to think positively.

"Right, well, shouldn't you get ready then?" I try to say in a confident voice. Tyler jumps off his stool and walks over to me slowly. He reaches for me, leaning into me and I don't know whether he's going to kiss or hug me.

After a few silent seconds of my heart pounding in my ears, Tyler's hands find mine and he takes the coffee cup away from me.

"A half eaten croissant and this coffee will do," he murmurs in a husky voice, winking at me and taking a big gulp. I stand there frozen as he and my coffee turn away from me, walking into the bedroom and slamming the door shut behind them.

I close my mouth and try to look less gawky.

"Cheeky git," I mumble to myself, turning to pour myself another coffee.

****

Chapter 5

Undercover agents... Undercover romance Part 5

Midnight

He stood there flexing his muscles. He'd thrown his shirt off and was walking towards me slowly, with a snarl on his face.

"My name is Tess. I'm not who you think I am. You've had a lot to drink," I said slowly, trying to calm him down.

"You're lying to me!" He screamed, swinging his arm out and smashing everything that had been on the mantle piece next to him. Glass and other ornaments went flying to the floor near my feet and I had to shield my eyes.

I backed away, slowly towards the door.

"Stop lying to me, bitch. We've met before and you know it," he shouted.

I gulped and took another step backwards whilst thinking of a reply.

"Stop moving or I'LL KILL YOU. STOP MOVING," he screamed.

I stopped backing up and stood still, my hands at my sides.

"We've never met before. I'm engaged to Tyler Carrington, Victor Kane's nephew. You have the wrong girl," I said shakily.

Before I could respond he threw himself at me, knocking me onto my back. He had dived short and his head was near my knees as we both lay winded on the cool wooden floor boards. I quickly turned over and began to crawl away. He grabbed my ankle and I kicked out, hoping to hit him in the face with my heels. I slipped and had to turn over onto my back again- so that I could see him enough to fight back.

He was too strong for me and within seconds was pulling me backwards as he lunged forwards- pulling me under him.

I screamed and kicked out again but his weight pressed down on me. His hands found my wrists and he pinned them down to the floor at my sides. He was now straddling me; his whole weight on top of me, making it impossible for me to move.

"Now, will you listen to me?" he said more calmly.

I nodded, scared of what he'd do if I said no.

"Now you are not Tess-" he began again.

I shook my head.

"You're name is Effie. EFFIE. And like I said, we've met before."

***

Earlier that day

"You get to wear jeans."

"Yes, but that's because I'd just look stupid in a dress."

I rolled my eyes and impatiently tapped my foot on the floor of the elevator. We were going to the very top of the building- which apparently is made entirely of glass and even has a garden. So I've been told.

"This is going to be awful," I mumbled.

"Probably," Tyler replied chirpily.

"Oh come on," he said, putting his arm around me and pulling me into him "I'll be there to hold your hand. Victor said that this is the usual routine when you announce an engagement. You have to go public as a couple, and people will bless you and all sorts. We might even get gifts," he said in a tone that reminded me of someone trying to convince a child that their 'first day of school won't be *that* scary'.

"Gifts?" I replied, raising my eyebrow.

"Yes. Gifts. Pretty, shiny gifts," he said slowly. We both sighed at the same time and stared off into the distance.

"Fine." I said loudly, interrupting our daydreaming.

The elevator doors opened and we were greeted by a loud explosion of colour and noise. At first I jumped, scared that a bomb had gone off or that there was some other awful danger.

It was worse.

"Congratulations!!" approximately a hundred people shouted, raising glasses of champagne in our direction.

Luckily Tyler was thinking straight and laughed, before leading me out of the elevator by the hand.

We were in a large room which had a bar and seating area at one end that was next to a wall made entirely of glass. The ceiling was also made entirely of glass, and already the bright sunlight was irritating me.

A waiter next to the elevator handed us a glass of champagne each that I tried to decline. In the end I had to whisper in his ear 'If I take this drink, can you get me a non-alcoholic one? Just bring it to me and I'll swap them'.

He shook his head and apologised.

Tyler let go of my hand and walked a few feet ahead to talk to some people.

"Ma'am, it would be considered very rude of you if you do not toast with the expensive champagne as provided by Mr Kane."

I smiled at him and whispered, again.

"Here's the thing..." I checked his shirt and saw a name badge, "Barry. I'm very, very hung-over. If you don't get me a non alcoholic drink I'll see to it that you, Barry, will be personally made to clean up my vomit. Please."

The poor waiter looked horrified, but to his commendation he nodded and walked off into the distance.

I looked around me and saw that Tyler was in the middle of a conversation with an old gentleman. No one had heard my conversation with the waiter.

"Oh you are beautiful! Is that dress Chanel? Oh I've heard such things about you..." an old woman, over dressed and covered in an inch of make-up said to me.

It went on for what seemed like hours. All the women would come up to me and shake my hand, which was usually followed by either a congratulations or something along the lines of 'marriage will ruin your life'. It was mainly the older ones who were so negative.

I was already on my second glass of non-alcoholic champagne, which tasted a lot like a mild fizzy apple juice. It probably was just that.

I hadn't seen Tyler for over an hour- all the older men were congratulating him and telling him stories on what to expect from marriage. At one point I walked up to him while he was talking to a large, grey whiskered old man who had his back to me. When Tyler saw me walking towards him his eyes widened and he shook his head slightly. He was warning me not to come any closer.

Stupidly I ignored him and carried on walking towards him, my curiosity getting the better of me. When I was just behind the old man I could hear him clearly.

"... make the most of it before children. Ya' hear me lad? It's never the same downstairs if you know what I mean. It's like she has an empty paper bag between her legs. It's the childbirth..." I could just hear him say.

"Oh god," I whispered. Tyler looked slightly horrified but nodded at the old man. I started to walk away just as Tyler looked at me with an apologetic expression.

Are all old men that disgusting?!

I couldn't bear the thought of speaking to any more people so headed towards the end of the room where a few people were sat.

I threw myself into a small armchair that faced the glass window. I hadn't noticed the garden on the other side which looked amazing as it overlooked the city. I threw my purse onto the table next to me and relaxed, tempted to close my eyes.

"Tired are we?" a recognisable voice said from beside me. I opened my eyes to see a young, clean shaven

guy sat on the chair that was on the other side of my table.

"Just a little. Busy few days. And you are...?" I replied politely.

He laughed and rubbed his chin with his hand.

"Didn't realise I was that unrecognisable clean shaven. My name's David, we spoke for a few hours last night. You should most definitely recognise me." He answered me.

I gasped and laughed awkwardly.

"I'm so sorry! Wow. It's not just the face..."

"I know, I know- I made sure that I looked my best today. Last night I'd spent the day drinking and gambling- I probably didn't leave a good impression on you. I'm hoping to redeem myself." He said sincerely. I was about to apologise when he interrupted me.

"And I'm pretty sure you were drunk. Very, very drunk. I won't be surprised if you can't remember much," he said, winking at me.

Oh god. How mortifying. I leaned forwards and took his hand that was resting on the table.

"I'm really, really sorry if I said anything out of turn last night. I didn't mean to be rude or offensive-"

"Honestly Tess, it's fine. I'm very thankful for what you did last night," he said smiling.

I smiled back at him and took my hand off his before leaning back into my chair.

He picked up my glass of 'champagne' that was on the table and sniffed it. He laughed and shook his head.

"You sly fox. I wondered why you were able to drink after last night," he said.

I couldn't help but laugh. I raised a finger to my mouth and shushed him, raising an eyebrow- trying to look mysterious.

"Don't tell anyone my secret. I've already been warned that not drinking Victor's expensive champagne is punishable by death," I almost whispered.

David smiled and winked at me conspiratorially.

"Ah don't worry, your secret is safe with me. You can be an undercover drunkard," he joked.

When he said the word 'undercover' my smile wavered and I laughed awkwardly. Oh dear.

"You are something Tess. You're not shallow or self obsessed like most of the women here. What is about money that only attracts that type? Never mind. Don't answer that."

Wow. That was out of the blue.

He looked away from me, deciding to stare out of the glass towards the garden. The bright sunlight glinted in his eyes and highlighted his face- exaggerating his high cheekbones. For a minute I just watched his face- he looked like a male model staring pensively...

I had to breathe deeply to clear my head, and then followed his gaze.

For the first time I noticed the flowers lining the garden, and the pond in the centre. It looked like someone had taken a meadow and dropped it onto a

building. It looked surreal- the rooftops of other buildings surrounding the garden.

"It's beautiful," I whispered.

"Yes, I agree. Beautiful" he replied as I turned to look at him. He wasn't looking at the garden but at me as he said it. I didn't know what to say, so turned back to look at the garden- pretending like he hadn't said anything. It was the look in his eyes that unnerved me; he sure didn't look like he was talking about the garden.

I was about to turn back around to talk to David when Tyler appeared standing next to him.

"Hello cousin," he said to David, placing a hand on his shoulder. David looked at me for a second and then looked at Tyler with a large grin on his face.

"Congratulations on your engagement. It seems odd me congratulating you now when I've known for weeks but what the heck," he replied while standing up.

"Oh no, don't get up on my count. I didn't mean to interrupt your conversation-"

"It's fine. I was just going. It was lovely talking to you Tess."

David nodded his head in my direction and walked off quickly.

Tyler looked at me and smiled.

"That was a bit odd wasn't it? Oh, I just came to talk to you," he said, crouching down next to my chair so that he was the same level as me. He pulled out some rectangles of white paper and fanned them out- waving them in front of my face.

It took me a second to realise that they were cheques. Money.

I snatched them off him and began to examine them, a look of amazement on my face.

Eight thousand, nineteen thousand, twenty-eight thousand, FOURTY thousand...

Tyler leaned forwards and placed a hand under my chin, shutting my mouth. I didn't realise I'd been staring with it open.

"This is a lot," was all I managed to say.

"Yup. It's all to go towards the wedding," he said matter-of-factly, leaning forwards to take the money off me.

"Oh well then I'll look after it," I said quickly, grabbing my purse off the table.

"That's definitely not happening," he replied, laughing as he began to try and take the money off me.

Five minutes later and I was shouting 'Our money! It's our money!' in between gasps for breath as Tyler tried to take the cheques off me.

"Hope I'm not interrupting anything," Victor's voice said from behind us. I dropped the money and almost jumped out of my chair. Tyler smiled and leant forward to quickly kiss me, and then stood up.

"Sorry, we were just messing around."

"Oh it's understandable; I usually find these types of events unbearable. Listen, I have some things here for you. I was going to give them to you later, but it turns out I'm going to be busy. I'm going to be unable to show you around beforehand, so please

familiarise yourself with the map and planes. It's the details about what you'll be doing tonight. I'm very pleased you're doing this Tess." Victor said. He handed Tyler a large envelope, gave a curt nod and then walked away.

Tyler passed me the envelope, smiling.

I took it off him and opened it. It was just full of papers, timetables... that kind of thing. I looked up at Tyler who was still smiling.

"See, he's not that bad. He's 'pleased' with you."

I shook my head.

"I'm still terrified of him."

***

"I want to look smart and intimidating," I said, turning around in front of Tyler who was sat on a stool by the breakfast bar.

"You're going for intimidating? The short skirt doesn't help. To me you look a little bit smart, mainly sexy-"

I stuck my tongue out at him and pulled my skirt down. The last thing I want is to look sexy in a school full of boys. Well, it's kind of a school.

I was wearing a tight fitting white shirt along with the black skirt and jacket. None of these clothes were mine, if it was my choice I'd be wearing more casual things.

"Are we ready to go yet?" Tyler asked.

I bit my bottom lip out of nervousness and nodded unenthusiastically.

"Oh Tess please, don't be scared. I'll be with you for the whole night." He said encouragingly- jumping off his stool to wrap an arm around me.

"The WHOLE night," he added with a large grin and a nod of the head, full of innuendo.

I hit his arm as we walked towards the door and didn't speak to him for the whole journey to the old manor. In fairness it was only a five minute drive around the corner, but still- I was very proud of the fact I didn't speak to him.

***

Have you seen the movie American Psycho? Well I swear- Patrick Bateman was waiting for us at the door to the manor. Okay, maybe it wasn't. But it did look like him.

He greeted us and introduced himself as Rick, to which I nudged Tyler and mouthed a 'told you so'.

Earlier he'd told me to not be so ridiculous when I'd whispered that he was definitely Patrick Bateman. Rick/Patrick- same thing, what more proof do you need?! Tyler just shook his head and whispered the word 'crazy' at me.

When he first saw me he had looked me up and down in a way that had made me feel uncomfortable. Even now, every time he looked at me I felt like he was either thinking of something dirty or looking at me like I was a piece of meat. It was incredibly creepy.

"Did you say your name was Patrick?" I interrupted him at one point.

"No, it's just Rick," he replied. Tyler laughed at me behind Rick's back.

He took us through a giant lobby that had a chandelier the size of a car hanging from the ceiling, and into another room which only contained a giant staircase and landing lined with portraits.

"I'll take you to your rooms first. They used to belong to Victor Kane's son himself who lived here until his eighteenth birthday, last year. I assure you that they are the best rooms in the manor. Try not to break anything yeah?

Oh, and only the eldest students live in this part of the building; you probably won't bump into any of the young ones. They're all little shits anyway," Patrick informed us. Wow. Attitude.

"Here we go."

He unlocked a door and led us into a large sitting room. It looked like something from a Harry Potter movie. Portraits, stone and wood panelled walls, a fireplace, heavy wooden furniture...

"The bedroom is just through that door there, and the bathroom is through there. All your belongings have been unpacked and are waiting for you. And there's no kitchen-you'll eat your food with everyone else downstairs in the dining room."

Tyler and I nodded. Patrick asked if we had any more questions but I just shook my head, I wanted to get away from him as soon as possible.

"Oh, and just a warning- some of the residents are in the middle of celebrating. They won a swimming match against Alderly Estates. Alderly Estates lost, but it's always been tradition for them to drink with us after the night after the match. You might bump into some very drunk people fighting in the corridors tonight."

With that he was gone, and I pulled out the piece of paper that contained my instructions.

'The residents in the manor are very important to Victor Kane. One day he hopes that they will be able to work for him as some of the most successful business men in the country. Every day the eldest group, ranging from the age of 16-18 will have

different lessons/tasks ranging from business skills, languages, maths and gym. Your job will be to provide them with support and attend at least 3 of their daily lessons. You are their support tutor.

You should get to know the students on your first evening here. They will most probably be studying or relaxing in their rooms.'

Ha. Studying. Yeah right.

I read it to Tyler who laughed.

"Let's introduce ourselves now then whilst the majority of them are still sober- and then we can have the rest of the evening free, it's only seven o'clock now," Tyler said grinning.

I nodded and took his hand as we left the room.

Chapter 6

Undercover agents... Undercover romance Part 6

I only just found this in a random file on my laptop! Forgot I'd even typed it haha

Uploading it anyway, months and months too late :S

(It also ends with the fight scene at the beginning of the last chapter, sorry about not including that last time)

:)

x

"Hey. I'm Tess- I'm going to be helping you guys over the next few months," I said weakly, adding a small wave. Oh ground; please swallow me up.

The room I was standing in was small, with seven good looking guys sat in front of me. Twice I nearly burst out laughing when I remembered that I was the same age as some of them.

Most of them were leaning back in their chairs looking 'cool', disinterested or bored. Often they would wink at me whenever I accidentally caught their eye.

Arrogant bastards.

Tyler looked like he was one of them- the only difference being that he was standing at the back of the room, leaning against a wall as opposed to sitting at a desk. When I'd first got everyone's attention he had given me a really cheesy thumbs-up.

Bless him.

Out of all of the guys in the room, Tyler is probably the most attractive. Well, that's only my opinion- he's

just more my type compared to the others. He's not trying too hard to be cool or anything.

And I suppose he can be really nice at times. It's really hard to find someone who's good looking with personality...

Did I really just think all that? Great personality?!! He's one of the most irritating people I know.

Now every time I look at Tyler my cheeks burn and I feel myself blushing. Great.

"So, yeah! That's about it. Any questions?" I finished, hoping to God there would be none.

One guy put his arm up and I nodded at him, indicating for him to speak.

"You want us to call you Tess? Or would you rather Mrs Kane? Oh wait; he's not a real Kane is he? It's just Carrington isn't it?" he said, dripping with attitude.

What the hell does he mean by that?!

"What's your name?" I asked him in an icy tone.

"Lloyd."

"Well Lloyd, Tess will do just fine thanks," I replied. He's only said one thing to me and already I hate him.

"Any other questions?" I asked everyone again.

"Basically she's just a glorified maid," Lloyd said loudly to the guy next to him.

I froze and didn't know what to say. What a jerk!

People around him started laughing and I just stood there, not knowing what to do next.

I looked up towards where Tyler was to see that he had pushed himself off the wall, his hands balled into fists. I rolled my eyes at him and gave him a long hard look- trying to tell him that I don't want him to fight my battles. God I hope he controls his temper.

I turned to Lloyd with a large, fake smile plastered on my face.

"Lloyd, shut the hell up," I said calmly.

Lloyd shrugged and a second later he was stood up muttering,

"It was nice talking to you but we have somewhere we need to be."

Everyone else in the room took that as their queue to leave as well. Some of them waved as they passed me but the majority of them didn't even look at me.

Eventually it was just me and Tyler left in the room.

He walked over to me, looking a little concerned.

"They really are complete assholes," he said in a sympathetic voice.

Just then my phone vibrated and I took it out of my pocket.

It was a message from an unknown number.

'Good luck Tess, I know how intimidating it can be in the manor. This is my number if you ever need any help, please don't hesitate. David x'

David?

Is that David Kane?! Wow.

"Who's that?" Tyler asked, leaning forwards to read the message. I showed it him and his jaw tightened as

if his teeth were clenched together. His face went blank, almost like he was trying very hard to hide his emotions.

"Well that's interesting," he eventually muttered to himself.

I have a sneaky suspicion that David has a 'thing' for me. Mainly because of the way he acted around me this morning, and now because of that text message.

That's really annoying. I'm supposed to be an undercover agent here- if he has fallen for me he'll only make my job harder. Emotions can be such a pain.

That's probably what's angered Tyler about the message- the prospect of our mission being jeopardised.

I hate it here in the manor enough as it is. Now everything could be going wrong all because I stupidly led on Victor Kane's son.

I nodded and brought my hands to my face to press them against my forehead out of sheer stress.

"Why am I doing this? There are a hundred places I'd rather be," I whispered to myself.

"Right, that's it. Give me a second," Tyler said in an authoritative voice, interrupting my thoughts. He took my phone off me and pressed some buttons to turn it off, before leaning forwards and sliding it back into my pocket.

"We planned a free evening didn't we? Let's do it. Don't worry about all this until tomorrow, in the mean time lets just enjoy this evening of complete freedom," he said whilst taking my hand and pulling me out of the room- before I could even say anything back to him.

He ducked as we reached the corridor and looked left and right before yanking me again; pulling me along as he crept down the corridor towards a closed door.

I giggled and couldn't help mimicking his crouching. When we reached the door he pulled it open and checked to see if the coast was clear before entering.

We walked like this for a few minutes, up a set of stairs and through another corridor. At one point, as

we reached a corner, we heard voices and he pushed me against the wall with a finger against my mouth to shush me. When the voices disappeared he started again.

Eventually we turned a corner and were faced with a tiny hallway which was a dead end with a door in the middle. Tyler finally let go of me and walked towards the door. When he reached it he pulled the handle to open it- but nothing happened. He swore under his breath and turned around to face me.

"Sorry, I just need to borrow you for a second," he whispered to me.

He took two steps towards me and brought both of his hands to my face. His eyes were staring into mine as his fingers brushed the sides of my face. He moved his hands towards my hair, and leaned an inch closer to my face.

My breath caught in my throat and I didn't have a clue what he was doing. It felt like my head was full of a buzzing white noise- I couldn't even formulate a thought.

A second later he smiled at me and gently pulled two bobby pins from my hair.

"Thanks," he whispered, before turning back towards the door.

Ooooh.

That's what he was doing.

I bit my lip, hoping that the pain would help me compose myself and think straight.

A second later the door clicked and creaked open. Tyler pushed it to open completely and stood aside to let me past.

"After you," he said, grinning at me and bowing flamboyantly. I curtsied as I passed him, jokingly, and walked cautiously through the door.

The room was dark, but I felt the wall for a light switch. Eventually I found it and flicked it on.

I stared at the room around us as Tyler closed the door behind himself.

We were in what looked like a large drawing room. Some of the furniture was covered in white sheets,

and there was a large gilt mirror above a fireplace, a long wooden table, a large white grand piano and a drinks cabinet still visible.

The walls were an off-white colour and the dark, dull red carpet was covered in dust. In fact, nearly everything in the room was covered in dust.

"This room is amazing!" I said in awe.

Tyler came up behind me and placed his hands on my arms.

"We're not staying here. Let's grab a drink and move on," he whispered in my ear.

"But I like it in here-" I started, just as Tyler gently pushed me towards the drinks cabinet.

He took his hands off me and walked in front of me to open the cabinet.

All the glass bottles were caked in dust.

"Are you sure we can drink things this old?" I asked.

"Of course," he replied.

He took a bottle off one of the shelves and blew on it to reveal the label. 'Oh no' he muttered, placing it back. He did the same thing a few times before finally deciding on a bottle.

"C'mon then. Next room," he ordered me.

I crossed my arms and shook my head. I like this room too much to be taken somewhere else.

He rolled his eyes and pointed to the wall next to us.

"There's a door here that goes to a small attic. Let's go!" he said.

I turned to look where he was pointing but couldn't see a door. Am I being stupid or is Tyler hallucinating? There is definitely no door.

Tyler passed me the bottle of alcohol before walking up to the wall and pressing the palms of his hands against it. He moved his hands across the wall until he found what he was looking for. I couldn't help but laugh because he looked a 'little bit' crazy.

His fingers latched around a crack and he pulled until bits of dust and plaster fell to the floor and the

outline of a door became visible. Eventually after a bit of struggling (I just stood and watched) a door shape appeared and he pulled it open.

It revealed a small wooden staircase winding up into the darkness.

Tyler stood to the side and I could tell he was about to be all chivalrous and let me pass. Noooo way.

"You're definitely walking up there first," I whispered shakily. He laughed at me.

"Fine."

I stayed close behind him as we walked up the stairs. When he reached the top Tyler and I had to duck through a door frame and we entered a small attic space.

One of the walls was completely slanted and covered in long windows that were almost opaque from condensations and cobwebs.

There were random beams of wood intersecting the room- and the ceiling, floor and walls were all exposed wooden planks.

The only things in the room were a large oval rug and a few large wooden boxes.

Tyler walked ahead and sat on the rug, leaning against a wooden box. He patted the floor next to him, for me to join him.

Cautiously I walked over to him and sat down, being careful not to sit too close to him. I shouldn't have bothered- because he just shuffled up and put his arm around my back anyway. I rested my head on his shoulder as we both stared straight ahead towards the cloudy windows. He grabbed the bottle of alcohol and took a large gulp before passing it to me. I took it and put it on the floor next to me- there's no way I'm drinking.

"Peace at last," he whispered, sighing.

"How'd you know about these rooms?" I asked curiously, after a minute of silence.

"I've seen the blueprints for this building. I studied them and made sure I knew them off by heart, just in case. All part of my briefing," he answered me.

"Tyler! Shusssh. You can't mention that here-" I started; worried that someone could be listening to us.

"Don't worry, no one can hear us here. There's a good metre of floor beneath us and we're above that empty room which I locked behind us. Completely soundproof, no one will hear us. We can just be us here- no more pretending," he said.

"Oh," I answered, not knowing what to say.

We sat still for a few minutes, not saying a word to each other.

"I knew about this mission months before you did," Tyler said, breaking the silence.

I took my head off his shoulder and sat up straighter, turning to face him. Tyler turned to look at me, and I was surprised that there was no smile or smug look like usual.

"They didn't tell me about you until a week after I accepted the assignment. I remember thinking, 'Damn I feel sorry for the poor girl who's dragged

into this'. I'm sorry," he said quietly with a look of sadness.

"Tyler, don't be sorry. It's my job! I'm not stupid; I know what I'm getting into. This isn't my first assignment," I replied.

"That's not what I mean. Have you noticed that there's something not quite right about this mission?" he asked, his eyes widening as if he was talking about something naughty.

"What do you mean?" I asked quietly.

"I mean, why an engaged couple? Why not just 'Tyler Carrington' coming home to see his uncle? There doesn't need to be this 'engaged' excuse to get close to him. Why do they need you? There's a reason why they brought a female into the mission, but I can't figure out why."

I didn't know what to say. I can see where he's coming from though. I mean; they didn't tell me about the mission until the day it started. They'd had to prepare Tyler for months... am I some sort of pawn

in a larger game? Am I a double agent? Am I a dispensable agent?!

Oh God. Being a dispensable agent is the worst thing.

There have been dispensable agents before- where they just bring someone in to die for the cause. They might not be able to bring Victor Kane down without someone dying to make the plan fall together.

They could be using me as bate, hoping that someone will kill me and Tyler will be allowed to avenge my death. Even worse, I could be here to kill Tyler. Maybe that's why Lady Cole warned me to not fall for him...

"Whenever I look at you I worry about what they're going to make you do," Tyler said, interrupting my thoughts.

Suddenly I was terrified.

I brought a hand to my face and covered my mouth. Please don't cry, please don't cry...

Without warning Tyler turned towards me and wrapped his arms around me. He squeezed me tightly, burying his head in my hair.

Eventually my breathing calmed and I closed my eyes, relaxing.

"Whatever happens, I'm sorry," I whispered. Tyler pulled away from me to look in my face- his arms still around me.

"Don't be sorry Tess. I'm not worried about me; I knew what I was getting into. And anyway, you've made this assignment more enjoyable than I thought it would be," he said, smiling.

"How so?" I asked.

"Oh I don't know... your drunken rant at David when we were in the club was quite enjoyable. Your awkwardness around Victor Kane is amusing. Oh, and the way you get easily irritated by me is endearing-"

"You don't irritate me that much!" I said, interrupting him. He laughed, shaking his head.

"Oh come on Tess, there are plenty of times when you have wanted to kill me," he said.

"Yes, but there are more times when I haven't wanted to!" I said defensively.

"What have you wanted to do to me then?" he asked, in a surprisingly serious tone.

"I don't know what you mean," I stuttered, at a loss for words.

"I've always wanted to do this," he said in a low voice, before leaning in to kiss me.

Every other time when I've kissed Tyler it's been under the cover of Tess and Tyler. The engaged couple.

Now we were alone and being ourselves it was different somehow. It was less like acting.

His lips moved against mine and without thinking I responded, kissing him back. My hands moved up until they were behind his head and Tyler gently pushed me against the floor. He manoeuvred himself so that he was lying on top of me, his body pressed

against mine. I don't even remember him positioning himself in-between my legs, but here we were- my legs wrapped around him, kissing for all of eternity.

One of his hands made its way down to my waist and he slid it under my fitted shirt. Somewhere in the back of mind a small voice was protesting, telling me that I should bat his hand away and refrain from all this 'canoodling'. I opened my mouth as my mind cleared, but instead of telling him to stop I gasped as his hand slid up my shirt, and as he moved from my mouth so that he was kissing and nibbling down my neck towards my-

"Tyler, NO!" I almost shouted. Instantly he froze and slowly looked up at me. His eyes were glazed over, concentration on his face. Yep, I was definitely distracting him from doing something he was engrossed in-

"But I'm having fun..." he mumbled before turning back to stare at my chest.

"We really shouldn't-" I started. Tyler ignored me and started to unbutton my shirt. Instinctively I shut my eyes and arched my back to get closer to him...

"No!" I whispered again. It didn't stop Tyler, so I wriggled around, trying to free myself of him. It worked- a second later we were both sat up. My legs were almost wrapped around him but at least we weren't all over each other like before.

"We shouldn't be doing this Tyler. This isn't you, and this isn't me. We're on someone else's time; we should be working for God's sake. If it was the 'real world' and I was Ef-" I stopped, surprised that I had nearly told him my real name.

Tyler had been sat there silent, burning me with his sultry gaze... but now he looked more alert, more upright.

"Ef what? Ef... Ef... Effigy? Fiona? Efalump?"

I shook my head, my lips pursed.

"I didn't mean to... just ignore what I said," I panicked.

"Effalant? Effbert?" he guessed again.

I shook my head, and even though I should be worried I was smiling slightly at his lame guesses.

I could see his mind ticking, and after a moment's silence he cracked into a large grin.

"Well, Ef- when all this is over I would very much like to take you out. Continue from where we left off. That means we'll have to hide from the agency for a year or so... but I think it's worth it; I'd drop all of this for you. I really do like you, y'know. And I don't want you to think that this is me- I'm also someone else... I'm also an Ef."

"Your name begins with Ef?" I asked.

"Well, no. But I'm not as dippy as you are. I'm not telling you my first syllable."

I slapped his arm playfully. I'm not dippy!!

I don't know how it happened but in the next moment we were kissing again, with the same intensity as before. This time it was Tyler who pulled away.

"Don't ever think that I'm Tyler. If you end up hating him, it's not me. Please don't forget that I'm an 'Ef' as well. When this is over-"

"When this is over, yes. Yes, why don't the non-Tess and non-Tyler give it a try?" I asked, trying to make as much sense as I could without giving too much away.

He laughed out loud, his eyes sparkling and his mouth grinning.

"It's a good job Tyler and Tess are engaged. I don't think I'd be able to take it if I saw you with another guy. No getting off with any of your students okay? You, are, mine-" he said before kissing me again. His phone started vibrating which interrupted us and he stopped kissing me, leaning his forehead against mine and sighing.

"You said that our phones had to be turned off, this is supposed to be our free night," I murmured, aware that his mouth was still hovering millimetres away from mine.

"My phone was off. Only the agency can get through when it's not on. I need to answer this," he whispered, sounding frustrated- before standing up and answering his phone.

"Hello... yes. Yes it is... I beg your pardon? Right... secure? I'll go outside, one minute," his voice had changed and he sounded like the normal, slightly arrogant Tyler.

He winked at me and mouthed 'five minutes' before walking out of the room, downstairs and out of sight.

I stayed where I was, sat facing where Tyler had been only moments before. When the realization hit me that Tyler had promised that he'd give us a try after this assignment, I sighed and fell backwards, lying on the oval rug.

"Ohmygod," I whispered. What the hell did I agree to? I love my job. It's been my life. Will I really give everything up to run away with him? I don't even know him, and quite frankly I often find him irritating. He did say that that was 'Tyler' though and not him... maybe he's less annoying really.

I smiled slowly and moved my arms in a little 'victory' dance. A minute later I was standing, clearing my throat and straightening my outfit. I hope no one saw my un-cool dancing!

I looked around the room, thinking about what to do. I really want to go back to the room downstairs...

Without thinking I was no longer in the attic but at the bottom of the stairs, staring at the large room in front of me. The room was empty and the door was no longer locked, Tyler must have gone outside.

I walked around the room, exploring the objects on the tables and looking in the cupboards in the cabinets. I found it fascinating, and was about the turn a vase upside down to look at what was on the bottom as my phone started vibrating. I nearly dropped the vase, but thankfully I didn't.

Who could be ringing me?

I reached into my pocket and pulled out my phone, looking at the screen to find out who it was. Withheld number.

Slowly I answered it and brought it to my ear.

"Hello?"

"Hello, this is June's Flowers. You made an enquiry about a wedding arrangement? Is that you Tessa?" a computer voice responded.

"My name is Tess," I replied slowly. There was silence on the other end of the phone, and instead a beeping noise filled my ear.

I rolled my eyes. Agency. They're performing a voice check to make sure it's me. After all, anyone could have answered my phone.

"Verification, Effie Perry. You have a message from Lady Cole," the voice continued before Lady Cole's voice echoed down the line.

"Perry, wherever you are, start walking towards your room. Don't stop for anyone and listen to what I say, do not repeat anything." I did as she said and walked towards the door of the room, and carried on down the corridor.

"We have new developments in your assignment. We haven't been able to fully brief you sooner because it would have affected everything. Are you familiar with David Kane?"

"Yes!" I said quite loudly, forgetting that it was a message I was listening to. The line went quiet and the computer voice returned.

"Breathing analysed, the line is secure and you are Ms. Perry. Please refrain from talking again."

Oops.

I forgot that I wasn't supposed to talk...

"David Kane is your new target," Lady Cole's voice said.

I nearly walked into a wall. What the hell? He's my new target? I shook my head and carried on walking to my room. I passed a few people and nodded in greeting as I passed them.

"We have heard from various sources that he is interested in you. We were banking on this Perry, and now the rest of your mission can go ahead. You are to seduce David Kane, and engage in an affair. You are to gain the affections of David Kane in any way possible. You will begin tonight by changing into a different outfit and going to Regent Park, where you will bump into David. It will be coincidental of

course, and you can use your own creativity to think of an excuse for being there," Lady Cole ordered me.

I stood there, in the middle of the corridor, almost near my room, shocked and surprised. Oh my God.

Someone at the end of the corridor looked at me with confusion, and I smiled shakily before walking again. When I made it to my room I shut the door behind me and slid to the floor.

"You are to engage in sexual relations with David Kane. Tyler Carrington has been briefed, and will be aware of your affair but for the sakes of the mission he will act unaware. No one else is allowed to know. You have an hour to change and make it to the park, David will be there."

The line clicked dead, and I brought a shaky hand to my mouth. So I'm supposed to have a full-blown affair behind Tyler's back?

I stood up and walked towards the window to see if I could see him outside. I couldn't.

"I'm so sorry," I whispered, a single tear rolling down my cheek.

I know that I'm not actually engaged to Tyler, and that this is my job... I should be fine doing what Lady Cole has told me to do. I should be able to just get on with it, like every other job I've had in the past...

But I can't.

I shut my eyes tightly, and heard the door open behind me. The door shut, and someone stood there in silence- breathing heavily.

"You know," I whispered, expecting it to be Tyler.

"Yes I do, bitch," an unrecognisable voice answered me.

I span around and was face to face with the guy in the corridor who had stared at me with confusion earlier. He was large, and well built- wearing an 'Alderly Estates' sports shirt. That's the team who the Kane residents had won a swimming match against earlier...

He looks familiar.

"What are you doing in my room? Please get out," I replied as confidently as possible.

"Don't play coy with me. You're not Tyler Carrington's fiancé. We've met before, remember?" he said in an aggressive voice.

"I don't know what you're talking about-"

"Yes you do!" he shouted at me, throwing an empty glass at me that I dodged.

"Well, who do you have me confused with?" I asked.

"Last year. My brother was an intern for Green Cole Industries. Three weeks later he had a new girlfriend. Really nice, she was. Sent us a few photos of him with her, and introduced us to his girlfriend, Effie Perry. Only problem is that she left him six months later, breaking his heart. Not even a goodbye. You left him for DEAD!" He roared, throwing himself at me. I grabbed a vase that was next to me and threw it at him before diving out of the way. His shirt was now soaked and glass sparkled on the floor in between us.

I closed my eyes briefly.

Shit.

I know exactly who he's talking about. Green Cole Industries is the public cover for Lady Cole's agency. I'd met Peter there. Peter Fellows, an intern who spent his working hours photocopying and running errands. He left his broken family to start a new life, and instantly we hit it off. From the moment we met in the elevator and I complimented his tie that on his first day working he'd accidentally set on fire and stapled a file to- we'd been inseparable.

I thought I'd be able to make it work, have a relationship with someone at home- and continue being an agent the rest of the time. When things got serious, six months later, Lady Cole had forced me to leave him- and I was sent to a different part of the country with my own apartment and with a false name.

I gulped, a lump appearing in my throat. I wonder how Peter is. I never did get to say goodbye...

Quickly I remembered that Peter's aggressive brother was stood in the same room as me.

He stood there flexing his muscles. He'd thrown his shirt off and was walking towards me slowly, with a snarl on his face.

"My name is Tess. I'm not who you think I am. You've had a lot to drink," I said slowly, trying to calm him down.

"You're lying to me!" He screamed, swinging his arm out and smashing everything that had been on the mantle piece next to him. Glass and other ornaments went flying to the floor near my feet and I had to shield my eyes.

I backed away, slowly towards the door.

"Stop lying to me, bitch. We've met before and you know it," he shouted.

I gulped and took another step backwards whilst thinking of a reply.

"Stop moving or I'LL KILL YOU. STOP MOVING," he screamed.

I stopped backing up and stood still, my hands at my sides.

"We've never met before. I'm engaged to Tyler Carrington, Victor Kane's nephew. You have the wrong girl," I said shakily.

Before I could respond he threw himself at me, knocking me onto my back. He had dived short and his head was near my knees as we both lay winded on the cool wooden floor boards. I quickly turned over and began to crawl away. He grabbed my ankle and I kicked out, hoping to hit him in the face with my heels. I slipped and had to turn over onto my back again- so that I could see him enough to fight back.

He was too strong for me and within seconds was pulling me backwards as he lunged forwards- pulling me under him.

I screamed and kicked out again but his weight pressed down on me. His hands found my wrists and he pinned them down to the floor at my sides. He was now straddling me; his whole weight on top of me, making it impossible for me to move.

"Now, will you listen to me?" he said more calmly.

I nodded, scared of what he'd do if I said no.

"Now you are not Tess-" he began again.

I shook my head.

"You're name is Effie. EFFIE. And like I said, we've met before."

"I've never heard of anyone called Effie. You have the wrong girl-"

He slapped my face, filling my head with a buzzing noise as stars appeared in my vision.

"Liar!" he bellowed, his warm breath against my face. He was panting with anger, his breathing heavy and loud in the empty room.

Slowly he looked me up and down, a smile appearing on his face. His breathing got heavier but he no longer seemed angry-

"Don't," I whispered as he moved on top of me. His rough hands, still tightly wrapped around my wrists, lifted my arms and pushed them back onto the floor above my head. He pushed my arms together and held both of my wrists with one hand.

"You're a whore who is good for one thing and one thing only. I'll ruin you," he whispered. I arched my back and tried to fight against him, hoping that his hand wasn't strong enough to keep both of my arms pinned above my head.

He balled his free hand into a fist and punched me in the stomach. I gasped for breath and shut my eyes, willing myself not to cry from the intense pain.

His hand moved up and he ripped my shirt open. The next minute his hand was tightly squeezing my left breast which shocked me into trying to fight him again.

"I want you to know that I will kill you when I break free," I said between clenched teeth. He laughed, shortly before falling on top of me. I didn't understand what had happened but tried to wriggle myself free from under him. I noticed that the back of his head was wet, and there was broken pottery covering him. Did someone throw and ornament at him?

Someone pulled him up from off me and I pushed myself up with my arms before backing away to the

nearest wall. I half slumped against it, relief washing over me.

Tyler was stood over my attacker, a look of fury on his face. The attacker groaned and tried to get up, but Tyler placed his foot on the back of his neck.

"I'll break your neck if you try and move," Tyler said in a terrifying, low voice.

He had his phone in his hand, busily texting away.

"Tess, I can get this sorted. Why don't you go into the bedroom and change? Don't you have somewhere to be?" he asked me unemotionally, without even looking at me.

He knows. He knows that I've got to go and meet David.

"Thank you for saving me," I whispered back, genuine fear slowly spreading through my veins as I thought about what could have happened if Tyler hadn't appeared.

"It was nothing. I did what I had to do," he replied unemotionally. His eyes flickered over at me and for a second his features warmed.

"I'm glad that you're alright, but you really should get ready," he whispered. He looked sad, but it was interrupted by the intruder moving underneath his foot.

"We'll talk about this tomorrow. Go," Tyler barked at me as I lay against the wall, frozen. I nodded and jumped up, running towards the bedroom and slamming the door shut behind me. As soon as I did I burst into tears, covering my mouth so that I made no noise.

I hate my complicated life.

Chapter 7

Undercover agents... Undercover romance [7]

I unpinned my hair, staring at myself in the mirror as my brown locks tumbled past my shoulders. I drew in a shaky breath and pulled the coat tighter around myself.

I had changed my heels for flats and was wearing a short cotton dress that was hidden under the white belted coat that I had thrown on only moments ago.

"You can do this Tess," I whispered to myself, leaning forwards to check my face in the mirror. My left eye looked puffy and my cheek was already swelling slightly, turning red- all thanks to my attacker earlier.

I wiped my eyes with the back of my hand and tried desperately not to cry. I don't want to go out and meet with David.

After counting to ten I worked up the courage to leave the bedroom. I walked into the room where Tyler had been only moments ago and was surprised to see that everything was straightened and the smashed glass gone- you wouldn't be able to tell that there had been a fight in here only minutes ago.

Speaking of Tyler, where is he?

I walked to the door that leads to the main corridor but stopped, my hand hovering over the handle.

Am I supposed to be subtle about my trip to the park? I doubt lady Cole will be happy if I'm unable to keep my affair with David Kane a secret. Maybe I should climb out of the window or something?

I sighed and backed away from the door, walking towards one of the large windows that overlook the front of the large manor. They were the type of windows that you have to pull up to open, the entire

bottom of the window sliding up. And oh, my, GOD they are heavy.

I strained for a few seconds but managed to lift it open enough so that I could slide through. I then checked the ground below me, before turning around and hanging from the small window ledge by the tips of my fingers.

Geronimo.

I let go of the ledge and landed on the ground almost silently, with a small roll- before hopping back on to my feet. I brushed myself off, my eyes darting left and right as I checked to see if the coast was clear- and then I whistled to myself as I began to walk slowly. You know, in that clichéd way people do to look all innocent.

Yep. I'm definitely trying to make this less horrific than it is. And before you ask, yes- I do think having an affair is horrific. I'm a gal with morals alright?

I stopped whistling and broke into a small jog around the edge of the building. I was crouching behind a row of bushes at the same time, and trust me- jogging

whilst crouching not only makes you look stupid but it's actually quite tiring.

I burst through a set of bushes and found myself in the bright lights of the lit path that leads from the main entrance of the manor to the driveway. Instantly (after of course spending half a second looking like a deer caught in headlights) I straightened myself and noticed a boy stood on the other side of the path staring at me with a look that said one thing-'what-the-hell?'.

"You," I said, extending a finger to point at him. "Come here."

He looked at me curiously, before turning around to check behind himself. He was making sure that I was talking to him- before he walked over to me with cautious steps.

"Yes?" his voice croaked.

Awww! The boy looked no older than fourteen and it was obvious his voice was just breaking. I was very tempted to ask him a question that would result in a

long answer from him- just because of his cute voice. But that would be mean. Right?

"I'm someone very important... you probably don't know me," I started, hoping that this would stop him from asking any questions or calling security, "In fact- I'm a relative of Victor Kane's, so you had better do as I say."

His eyes widened and he nodded slowly. "You're Mrs Carrington!" he croaked.

I nodded, not bothering to correct him that technically I won't be Mrs Carrington until I'm married.

"I was hoping to go for a night stroll to the large park near here. I just want to get away from all the loud partying that's going on in the manor..." I lied, rolling my eyes.

The kid nodded, his eyes wide with understanding.

"I was out here to escape them too. They make us bring the older ones drinks and all sorts, but I hate they way they boss us about like mere servants-" he started.

I nodded and acting as an agony aunt, as he talked about everything he hated about the older boys in the house. We were walking down the path, and soon we had passed the driveway and taken a small dirt path that wound through a line of trees. We had to cross a surprisingly quiet road (for the city) and walked down a road lined with a few buildings. Eventually the buildings thinned out, and the road was lined by a large wrought-iron fence that separated the street to the park.

"... and it's not fair! One day I'll be like them though. In four years time it'll be my turn," the kid was saying vehemently.

"Yes of course," I said emphatically and nodding sympathetically, trying my best to act like I really felt for him when really he just came across as a really spoilt brat.

"I completely understand. Now- I won't tell any of them what you've said, if you don't tell anyone about my little night-time walk. I don't want anyone worrying about me you see. I'll tell you what- tomorrow I'll even try and persuade the older boys to

go a little easier on you alright?" I said diplomatically. The kid nodded and stopped as we reached the open gates to the park.

"Thank you for your help..."

"Brian," he answered offering me his hand to shake. I thought it was oddly mature shaking the hand of a fourteen year old, but I did anyway. He then silently turned around and walked back down the street we'd just come from.

I watched as he disappeared from view into the darkness, and then I spun around to walk through the giant metal arches of the park- wasting no time.

Ten minutes later and I was walking along a winding path that snaked its way through the park. It was a clear night and when I wasn't passing under the orange glare of the lights lining the path, I could see the stars twinkling overhead. I pulled my coat tighter around myself and involuntarily shivered. It was cold and I wasn't wrapped up warm. After the attack earlier I had quickly changed into these clothes-

throwing on the first dress I could find. I hadn't even thought to throw on any pantyhose or anything- and now I was really regretting it.

"David, David, David..." I whispered idly, wondering where I would have to go in the park to bump into him.

Thanks a lot Lady Cole.

'Go to the park and bump into David'... yeah, that's reallllly precise.

I was busy shaking my head and having a mental conversation with myself when I actually, physically, bumped into someone.

"Oh Gosh I'm so sorry!" I blurted out in a flustered voice before I even had time to look at the person I had walked into. Instead of muttering 'it's alright' before shuffling away as quickly as possible in an attempt to forget the awkward moment (which usually happens in the city), the person placed their hands on my forearms.

"Tess?" a gut-wrenchingly recognisable voice asked incredulously.

I looked into the face of David Kane and smiled awkwardly.

"David! What are the chances? Bumping into you like that..." I said out loud- emphasising the word 'bumping'.

Yeah what are the chances?

"What are you doing out here on your own at this time? Are you alright, you seemed awfully distracted when we collided. And what's happened to your face? Did someone hit you?!"

Wow. I didn't realise it would be question time.

"I really don't know where to start!" I replied, suddenly feeling a mixture of emotions as a single tear escaped my eyes.

Oh no.

Oh no, no no no, no.

If David so much as shows me a second of sympathy or comfort I'll probably burst into tears.

'Ignore the tear David. Ignore it. Ignore it...'

-I willed him.

"Oh Tess!" he exclaimed, letting go of my forearms for the first time and wrapping his arms around me to squeeze me tightly, in a comforting embrace.

Oh great, just great. Now I'm crying for sure.

I hate these kinds of moments - the ones where you can't pinpoint exactly what you're crying over, but because someone is paying a second of attention to you, all your emotions just come bubbling out.

David guided me to the side of the path and set us down on a bench, pulling me closer to him and allowing me to rest my head on his shoulder as I cried into his coat.

After five minutes crying, my breathing had slowed and I had calmed down considerably. Sometimes I hiccoughed, but other than that I was relatively composed. I pulled away from David and had to gently manoeuvre myself out of the circle of his arms so that I could bring my own hand up to wipe my face.

"I must look like such a mess," I mumbled into my coat sleeve as I wiped my face in a typically un-ladylike fashion.

David smiled at me, with warmth in his eyes.

"What happened Tess?" he asked.

Oh crap. What do I say?

"Well, I'm actually an undercover agent, and someone recognised me today and beat the shit out of me. Then I was told to begin a sexual relationship with someone that I don't want to have a sexual relationship with but hey- I'm being forced to, in a way that reminds me an awful lot like prostitution."

Okay- I didn't actually say any of that. Instead I said,

"Oh nothing. I just had a silly argument with Tyler."

David tensed, and I could tell that he was doing his best to remain calm.

"So it was him that hit you in the face?" he said in a strained voice. Oh man he's angry.

I shook my head quickly.

"No, no that was something else. Just an accident," I said pathetically. It was only after I said it that I realised it would sound like I was a victim of domestic abuse in denial.

I was nearly close to tears again- upset with the fact that Tyler would now inevitably look like he had attacked me, when he would never do anything to harm me. It's not fair on him.

"Okay Tess, okay. If you don't want to talk about it then it's fine with me," David said soothingly in an incredibly patronising voice. Yep- he thinks Tyler hit me.

I looked away, finding it unbearable to look into his sympathetic eyes- and shuffled away from him so that I wasn't sat so close to him.

Not sure of what to say next- I chose to look up at the stars above and sighed.

"I often come here to relax," David whispered, sounding as though he was talking to himself and not to me.

I looked at him to see that he too was now staring at the sky.

I was a lot calmer than before- and now with a clearer head I remembered what I was here to do.

I can't believe I'd let myself cry, I'm supposed to be a professional. I'm good at my job- I never break down.

It was at that moment that I mentally slapped myself.

'Come on, do your damn job. Stop letting your emotions interfere,' I thought to myself.

"It's beautiful here," I replied breathlessly- in a voice that sounded a lot calmer than before. I looked at David as I said it, and he turned his head to stare straight into my eyes. We stared into each others eyes for just that second too long, and it was me who had to turn away first. I could hear David breath more heavily than before- in fact, I hadn't heard him breathing at all when I'd stared at him.

I turned back to look at him, and with all the courage in the world I smiled and shuffled closer to his body.

"I can't believe how cold it is tonight," I whispered.

David responded by lifting his arm up and wrapping it around me, allowing me to wriggle my way closer to him. Jeez, I was practically in his lap.

The arm that was wrapped around me draped across my body, and his hand was hovering over my chest. My head was leaning against his chest, and his other hand was making small movements as he brushed away strands of hair from my face.

"I'm so glad you're here. I'd probably still be walking around the park, colliding with strangers if it wasn't for you," I whispered.

David coughed gruffly and moved behind me.

"The pleasure is mine. I'm glad you bumped into me, you shouldn't be alone at this time of night."

That was the perfect reply for me. Here I was, trying in a way to 'seduce him'/ lead him on- and he was saying things like 'pleasure' and 'being alone at night'. I could have really thrown those words back at him and flirted for the next few hours...

But I couldn't bring myself to do it. A lump appeared in my throat and I thought of Tyler again...

I wonder where he is right now? Is he tucked-up in our bed at the manor? Or is he watching this awful moment from some dark part of the park...

I think David mistook my silence for something else, something romantic, and he gently sat me upright. His arms wrapped around me, and as I turned to look at him he moved his face closer to mine.

He stopped, inches away from my face- and it took everything in the world to not push him away. I could even smell the faint trace of stale alcohol on his breath which nauseated me. I'd almost forgotten about David's alcohol problem- but now, staring into his darkened eyes, dull skin and slight stubble- I felt repulsed.

"My cousin is a very lucky man," he whispered. I think he said it for his own benefit- to remind himself that I was engaged to his cousin. But it didn't stop him.

He leaned into me and kissed me.

I responded almost automatically, without any effort on my part. I didn't want to lead him on, but I didn't

want to jeopardize my mission by telling him to stop either.

He mistook my slight reaction to his kissing as mirrored passion, and he almost crumpled on top of me as he kissed me passionately. One of his hands was tangled in my hair, pressing my head closer to his and his other hand was pushing my back- forcing my body against his.

I felt trapped. And sick.

He moved his hand that was pressed against my back, sliding it across my waist to the front of my coat. Even the small movement of his hand moving across my side felt like a violation- and when he started to undo my coat I began to panic.

I couldn't take his slobbering, wet kiss any longer and I shut my mouth tightly whilst trying to wriggle out of his grasp.

David got the message pretty quick and pulled away, letting go of me.

"You're engaged to my cousin for Christ's sakes!" he almost shouted. He jumped up to his feet and turned

away from me, his hands balled into fists. He raised his hands to his head and ran his long fingers through his dishevelled hair.

What do I say?! Do I shout at him? But then David might dismiss all ideas of an affair, and Lady Cole will be so pissed at me for failing her.

I thought back to the daytime TV I sometimes watch when I've got nothing better to do- and though of those cheesy soap operas where everyone is sleeping with everyone. I tried to think of the stupid, clichéd things they say.

"I'm sorry David, that shouldn't have happened," I said breathlessly. Breathless from nausea... but once again he mistook it for romance.

He spun to face me, his eyes still burning with passion.

"But it did," he replied huskily.

Yuk.

Right, I have to get away from him.

I couldn't bear it any longer, and tried to think of a way to get away from him without failing Lady Cole.

I jumped up from the bench and dramatically sighed, running a hand through my hair. I was aware that my coat was hanging open and that David was staring at my dress as I breathed heavily- but I tried not to think about it.

"I'm sorry for not being able to control myself. It's completely my fault and not yours- you don't know the effect you have on me. I have to go. Please don't follow me David, don't make this more difficult than it is. I... I don't think I can control myself around you..." I said dramatically, before turning around and running down the path through the park. Only when I was at the gate did I turn to see if David was still standing there in the middle of the path- and he was. Just looking at his silhouette standing there in the middle of the park made me feel sick, and after wiping my mouth with the sleeve of my coat to erase any trace of our kiss, I turned and continued running to the manor without once looking back.

The run back to the manor had been uneventful, and I'd been able to walk through the front door without any hitches. I trudged up the stairs, acutely aware of my heavy breathing echoing in the silent corridors.

When I reached the door of mine and Tyler's rooms- I paused, my hand hovering over the handle. I couldn't bear to open it, but on the count of ten, I did.

The lights of the room were turned off, except for the small reading lamp on the desk in the far corner. I didn't immediately realise that Tyler was sat there until I had thrown my coat off and grabbed a small towel that had been draped over the arm of a sofa. I was frantically wiping my face and arms with disgust when I heard Tyler cough.

I dropped the towel and jumped almost a mile in the air- my heart doing somersaults in my chest.

"Oh my God you terrified me," I whispered, pressing a hand to my chest to make sure my heart was beating correctly.

"Sorry about that," Tyler said unemotionally from the other side of the room. "Turn the light on if you want.

I'm going to bed in a minute anyway- I was only up to make sure you got home safely."

A lump appeared in my throat and I nodded.

"Sorry, I've just been out..." I started in a weak voice.

"I don't want to hear about it," Tyler interrupted. He slammed a book shut that I guess he had been reading, and stood up from the desk. For the first time I noticed that he was shirtless, and wearing the same grey jogging bottoms that he'd worn to bed before. But that wasn't what made me go all weak at the knees.

He was wearing, wait for this- a pair of reading glasses. Don't ask me why, but in that moment I just found it amazingly cute and endearing. There's something about a tough, macho guy- who's incredibly ripped, wearing a dainty pair of reading glasses. I had to force myself from laughing.

"I didn't know you needed reading glasses!" I said without thinking, suddenly in a more jovial mood than I had been all night.

"Yes well there's a lot we don't know about each other," Tyler snapped. He marched away from the desk and tore his glasses off, before folding them up and putting them in his pocket. My second of happiness disappeared, wiping the smile from my face-and the nausea and revulsion of the night came flooding back to me.

"Don't for a second think that I'm okay with this. I might pretend that I'm okay, but I'm not. Next time you come in late I'd prefer it if you don't speak to me. I need to make sure you're alright- but I can't bear to talk or look at you when you come back," he said in a low voice, before opening the door to the bedroom and allowing it to close behind him.

I stood their feeling incredibly alone and scared.

"How do you think I feel? I can't bear to look at myself for what I've been forced to do," I said quietly to myself- silently hoping that Tyler could hear me.

I shook my head slowly and walked over to the bedroom. I tried to think of things to cheer me up and make everything seem trivial and less emotionally gut wrenching.

'It's not like he even knows me,' I thought to myself- thinking of Tyler. 'He doesn't half make a big deal out of nothing. I'm not even engaged to him, it's all a lie anyway. What harm does one more lie do?'

I pushed open the door and walked into the bedroom. Tyler was already lying on the far side of the bed with his back to me- and it looked like he could fall off the bed he was so close to the edge.

I rolled my eyes and stood there, thinking for a minute. Well, if he doesn't want to sleep next to me, why should I sleep next to him? I marched over to the bed and grabbed my pillow in one hand, and a blanket in the other. I couldn't be bothered to look for my nightgown so I left the bedroom- before sinking into one of the sofas in the sitting room. It faced the empty fireplace, and after kicking off my shoes and shoving the pillow under my head- I felt cold and alone. The cool leather of the sofa was uncomfortable against my skin and I spent almost ten minutes fumbling with the blanket to keep me warm.

When I was finally in a vaguely comfortable position I closed my eyes and tried to sleep- ignoring the

horrible feeling of having to return to this world in the morning.

About the Author

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